

THE FAMILY GOOD HEALTH GUIDE. By J Fry, A Moulds, G Strube and E Gambrill. (Pp vii + 292. £9.95). Lancaster, Lancs: MTP Press, 1982.

IN Part I of this book practical health education is offered at all the critical periods of life's development, from womb to tomb. The book is enjoyable to read, but some medical data may only be read and understood by the more educated public, and not by socially deprived people in the community. An admirable attempt is made however to educate about what constitutes 'Health and Non-Health' and how to live with 'normal abnormalities'. Structure and function of the sex organs are well related to advice about normal sex, and the pros and cons of different methods of contraception. All conceivable questions that might be asked by women in relation to pregnancy, the newborn, the pre-school and school years are posed and answered in simple terms. Infant feeding and preventive paediatric care are dealt with particularly well. The authors make quite clear to the lay person how to recognize an unwell child and what to do in terms of selfcare or use of health services. Problems of adolescence and marriage are handled tersely, in terms of defining communication difficulties and what to do about them. Corrective measures are offered to cope with the risks posed by the unhealthy life style of many middle-aged and elderly people. There is valuable insight offered into the process of ageing in life and the different responses of the elderly to sickness compared with younger persons. Principles of health care of the elderly are made clear.

Part II of the book provides the lay reader with some understanding of the underlying pathology of common disorders of the body systems and sensible instruction is given about measures to adopt to relieve symptoms and when to seek medical advice. Genito-urinary disorders are included, but the dangers of sexual promiscuity are insufficiently stressed in a book that professes to be a health guide. Syphilis and gonorrhoea are dismissed in simple factual terms in a few lines. The appendices round off a well balanced health guide by providing concise information on how to stop smoking and how to provide a diet for healthy living. This book is bound to provide a useful source of reference for the family in relation to health and sickness, and, if read by a sufficiently wide cross-section of society, should promote better understanding between patients and their doctors, and of the best use of health resources.

GWI

GASTROENTEROLOGY. By Ian AD Bouchler. Third Edition. (Pp 398 + Figs 120. £8.00). London: Baillière Tindall, 1982.

THIS book is one of the Concise Medical Textbook series by Baillière Tindall. This, however, is no set of abbreviated lecture notes. The text provides a comprehensive and up to date review of gastroenterology and the information is presented in a clear and lucid style. The clarity is enhanced by use of line diagrams and tables.

The present edition has been expanded to 28 chapters due both to the growth of the specialty and to some reorganisation of the material. The organisation of the book is largely based on organ systems but there are some chapters based on symptom presentation. There is additional scope for such an approach and a chapter based on the diagnosis of jaundice might be useful. A future edition might also benefit from a chapter on investigative techniques of gastrointestinal disease. The clinician in training needs some guidelines as to the use of the sophisticated methods now available for investigation in this area. There are occasional errors. Our surgeons would be very pleased if the recurrence rate after proximal gastric vagotomy was the 5 per cent quoted in the text.

This book is excellent value and is recommended for those seeking a readable and informative text to help with the Membership examination.

JRH

RECORDS AND CURIOSITIES IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY.
By ILC Fergusson, RW Taylor and JM Watson. (Pp 115. £7.50). London:
Baillière Tindall, 1982.

OBSTETRICIANS have always been obsessed by facts and figures concerning their-'product' and it is not surprising that someone has come up with the idea of producing what could be called 'The Obstetric Guinness Book of Records.' We read about the extremes of fecundity e.g. the remarkable feat of Mme Vasselet a Russian peasant who produced 69 children; and of her husband who after her death remarried